101 of the Kora River, comprising the former kingdoms of Kolattiri, Kottayam, Kadattunad and part of Kurumbranad. The central area comprises the modern South Malabar District and Cochin State (the former kingdoms of Calicut, Walluvanad and Cochin), and the southern area,
174 the kingdom of Travancore. In the course of
631 fieldwork it became clear that these overall differences of custom and social structure were connected with major political boundaries in the period of native rule. Though divisible into separate small kingdoms and chiefdoms, the whole of North Malabar District was temporarily overrun by the Kolattiri Rajas in the 16th and 17th centuries. The central area at one period or another was all conquered by the Zamorins and incorporated in the Calicut empire, while the whole southern area eventually became subject to the Travancore Rajas. In each of these three major areas, a somewhat different political system operated, [10] and in accordance with this the higher castes, especially the Nayars, were differently divided into subcastes with separate administrative functions: each of these subcastes in turn had a kinship system influenced by its occupation, relationship to the land, and
601 separate historical tradition. Much confusion
114 has arisen in past discussion of Nayar kinship because of failure to differentiate between the three areas: it was assumed that the Nayars had one kinship system, whereas they in fact had three, with different terminological structures.
121 In this paper I describe the traditional and mod-
101 ern political structures and the Nayar kinship

121 system of the central area of South Malabar and
101 Cochin, with brief references to social structure and Nayar kinship in North Malabar. No account is given of Travancore, since no fieldwork was done in that area.

631 III The Traditional Political System in the Cen-
564 tral Kingdoms

(1) Caste and Territorial Divisions

Throughout Kerala, the highest Hindu caste was the Nambudiri Brahmans, ritual and scholastic leaders of the people, who today form one hundredth of the total population. Carriers of the Sanskrit language and of ancient Vedic culture, they are thought to have entered Malabar by peaceful infiltration from the eastern plateau [11] early in the Christian era and to have established themselves, by reason of their literacy and supposedly superior ritual knowledge, as religious leaders over the already established
565 population. In the traditional period, they were
631 throughout Kerala important landowners and priests, in charge of most of the temples and public rituals. They ranked ritually above the kings and were above and outside the political systems of the several kingdoms. Alone of all the castes, they moved freely unmolested between enemy kingdoms, married across the boundaries, held periodic ceremonies and feasts attended by their caste-members from all parts of Kerala, and carried on their separate system
565 of intra-caste administration independently of the
631 administration of justice within the kingdoms.
623 For the latter purpose they divided out Kerala

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

Nayar: Central Kerala

The Nayars, unlike the groups so far described, form only a part-society—a named category of castes within the social system of southwest India. An account of their kinship system therefore requires a sketch of the political and economic system in which they were embedded. It seems to have been the Nayars' role as a specialized occupational group within a complex society which accounted for the most unusual features of their kinship institutions.

The Nayars differ also from the other groups considered with regard to their relatively high level of technological development. At least from the first century A.D., Kerala's social structure was based upon plough agriculture with irrigation, specialized crafts, and overseas trade (K. M. Panikkar, 1945: 36). Productivity was sufficiently high so that more than one-quarter of the population could be exempted from manual labor and set apart as specialist, literate groups engaged in religion, government, warfare, and wholesale trade. The Nayars, as the ruling and military castes, formed the core of this aristocracy and probably comprised between one-quarter and one-fifth of the total population.[1]

Partly as a result of direct legal changes brought about since the British conquest of 1792, and, more deeply, as a result of the change to an industrial fuel technology, the Nayar system of matrilineal groups has been gradually disintegrating over the past hundred years. Some of the traditional functions of these matrilineal units are being taken over by the elementary family and by the wider, personal, bilateral kindred of each individual. Other former functions of matrilineal groups have passed to such modern bureaucratic institutions as government, army, law court, and school. Because this book is a comparative study of matrilineal systems, I shall concentrate on Nayar lineages and kinship in the "traditional" period before the British

[1] Buchanan estimated the population density of Central Kerala at 100 per square mile in 1800 (1807, II: 501). The density for Cochin State was 814 per square mile in 1931 (Census of India, Cochin State, 1931).

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
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conquests; that is, from 1342, the date of the first useful Arabic account (Gibb, 1929) to the end of the eighteenth century. My sources include English translations of the writings of Arab, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, and French visitors to Kerala, works by English travelers, government servants, historians, and anthropologists, and a few historical works by Indian scholars who make use of indigenous Malayalam and Sanskrit documents.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship are not evenly distributed throughout the population. Some of the traditional institutions and relationships persist, especially in villages most remote from the seats of government and from modern market centers. Many other traditional usages are remembered by older people. Because of this, my own field work in three villages of Kerala—between November, 1947 and July, 1949—was able to provide me with the organizational framework into which to fit the literary material, and supplied me with many details on the traditional system not hitherto published.[2] Some information was also gleaned from genealogies, manuscript histories of particular lineages, and translations of Malayalam documents relating to land tenure, property transactions, and religious rites.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship comprise a large subject, which I have already briefly treated elsewhere (Gough, 1952*a*; see also Rao, 1957: 74–142). A full account will appear in a forthcoming book.

Ecology

Kerala, or the Malabar Coast, lies in the extreme southwest of India beside the Arabian Sea. The coastline is some 360 miles long, the area about 14,908 square miles. It is divided from the rest of South India by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the center by the Palghat Gap. From prehistoric to modern times, migrations took place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal region, but until the coming of modern transport the mountains prevented continuous contacts between the people who became established there and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its position laid Kerala open to contacts by sea with many peoples, including Jews and Arabs (from perhaps 800 B.C.), Egyptians and Phoenicians (ca. fifth century B.C.), Romans (first century A.D.), Chi-

[2] My field work in three villages of Central and North Kerala was made possible by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. The preparation and writing of these chapters have been carried out with the aid of two grants from the Social Science Research Council, in 1954 and 1958.

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Central Kerala Nayar

dependence of India in 1947. Cochin and Travancore were amalgamated in 1949 and, under popular pressure for the formation of linguistic states, the whole area was reunited as the State of Kerala in 1956. This state elected a Communist government in 1957.

After 1498 there were certain changes in Kerala's economy. Trade and towns expanded, gunpowder was introduced and wars became more devastating, and cash transactions became more prevalent among the aristocratic castes in villages (K. M. Panikkar, 1929: chap. XIV). But the basic form of the caste system and the pyramidal system of kingdoms, subordinate chiefdoms, and villages persisted with little change until after the Mysorean conquest. The Calicut kingdom gradually declined after 1498, for the Portuguese allied themselves with the small kingdom of Cochin to the south, freed it from Calicut's overlordship, and used it as a base from which to expel the Arabs and subdue the Zamorins. Nevertheless, with fluctuating boundaries Calicut remained the most powerful kingdom until the 1730's.

Although its internal political boundaries have shifted continually, Kerala is today still divisible into three major cultural areas. These are distinguished by differences in the names and numbers of the castes who occupy them, in dress, dietetic habits and ritual practices, and in the kinship systems of the several Hindu castes. The northern area, north of the Kora River, comprises the former kingdoms of Nileswaram, Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad. This was the area dominated by the Kolattiri kings in the fourteenth century and at various periods thereafter. In British times it became the northern part of Malabar District and the southern part of South Canara District; I shall call it North Kerala. The central area comprises the former kingdoms of Calicut, Walluvanad, Palghat, and Cochin. It was overrun by the Zamorins of Calicut at various times between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. In British times it formed South Malabar District and Cochin State; I shall refer to it as Central Kerala. All the southern area (until recently, Travancore State) was at one time or another subordinate to the kings of Travancore. The political systems—and consequently the internal caste divisions of the Nayars and the forms of their kinship systems—differed in these three areas. Much confusion has arisen in the past because of failure to distinguish between the three regions. It has been assumed that the Nayars had one kinship system, whereas in fact they had three, with different terminological structures. In this paper I describe Nayar kinship in two kingdoms of Central Kerala: Calicut and Cochin.

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564 tioned were called "high," "good," or "clean" castes. They lived in
[361] a separate portion of the village around the temples and the landlord's establishment, with each house in its own fenced garden. Except for the servant Nayars all might enter either Brahman or Nayar temples. Within this group, lower castes were forbidden to touch higher castes because of rules of ritual pollution, but individuals of different castes might approach each other within a few feet. Equal interdining took place only between caste fellows, but members of lower castes might *receive* food from higher-caste hosts. In ritual terms these castes thus formed the upper ranks of society, although only the Nayar retainers and those above them were economically and socially aristocrats. Nambudiris and two small castes of their temple servants were patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal.

101 I have designated as "Nayars" all the castes which bear this title
●121 today. They are not a unitary group but a named category of castes.
564 Traditionally, the title Nayar seems not to have been extended to all these castes. Before 1498 the military Nayars or retainer Nayars were called Lokar (Ayyar, 1938: 32). What the other matrilineal castes were called is not known. "Nayar" was not then a caste name
[703] but a title conferred by the king on lineages whose members had won special military honor. The Portuguese called all the soldiers "Nayars" and during the period of European trade it seems to have come into use as a title held by all the military castes. Some Nayars say that the temple menial castes and the matrilineal castes of washermen and barbers usurped the title only during British rule, in order to raise their status. The higher temple-servant castes, although matrilineal, never adopted the title because they ranked above the military Nayars and had honorable titles of their own. This paper primarily concerns the Nayar military retainers, their village headmen, chiefs, and royalty.

THE HIGHER POLLUTING CASTES

564 The high castes were the religious and secular aristocrats and their
162 personal servants. In many respects the polluting castes lived a sepa-
621 rate social life, being located in a different part of the village. They included, in order of rank, Tiyyars (called Iravas in Cochin), who were palm-wine makers and tenant farmers, with twenty to forty households per village; Kanisans or astrologers, with one to three households per village; the artisan castes of blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, bell-metal workers, and stonemasons (who ranked equally), each with one to three houses per village; low-caste washermen and barbers (who ranked equally), each with one to five houses per vil-

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

613 592 194 It seems probable that the property groups of retainer Nayars divided somewhat earlier in their development during the nineteenth century than during the period of native rule. The reason for this is that during British rule Nayar men, having no other compulsory work, considered themselves old enough to become kāranavans by the age of thirty to forty, provided their appropriate elders were dead. In the traditional period, presumably, a man would be in arms until at least the age of fifty and would be unlikely to press for kāranavanship before that age.

613 592 161 194 [195] Further differences in the patterns of division of property groups must have arisen from the marked increase in population during British rule. This is not documented until after the 1870's but from genealogies it appears to have begun between four and five generations ago. The increase would mean that more women, and a higher proportion of women, would have had enough living children to become the founders of discrete lineage segments during their lives or shortly after their deaths. Thus property groups in the nineteenth century would divide not only at an earlier point in their structural development but also more frequently than was the case during native rule.

613 592 194 423 The absolute size of traditional property groups was limited by the amount of land available to each. It can be roughly gauged by the size of the houses they left behind. It seems unlikely that a traditional retainer property group would contain more than twenty-five to thirty people, or fewer than six.

Interpersonal Kinship Relationships

● 121 I describe the relationships between kinsfolk as these have existed in the recent past in the most "traditional" households, making reference to earlier periods when this is possible.

WOMAN-SON

593 The relationship of mother and son was the strongest in the system in the sense of mutual obligation and the expectation of mutual love. A man should place the needs of his mother above those of all other [858] kin. A woman should show equal concern for her children of both sexes, but it was expected that her primary attachment would be to her sons.

[853] [863] [869] A woman's obligations to both daughters and sons in their early childhood included breast feeding to the age of two or three, care, especially in sickness, and instruction in cleanliness and in the manners and morals of their caste.

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Central Kerala Nayar

As a form of group marriage, the Nayar institutions clearly will not fit the definition of marriage proposed in *Notes and Queries in Anthropology*.[9] It did, however, legitimize children, which seems to me the minimum necessary criterion applicable to all those unions which anthropologists customarily label "marriage." As a new definition of marriage which will cover all the familiar types, the Nayar case, and several other unusual cases which are commonly recognized as marriage, I have suggested the following: "Marriage is a relationship between a woman and one or more other persons which provides that a child born to the woman, under circumstances not prohibited by the rules of the relationship, shall be accorded full birth-status rights in his society or social stratum" (Gough, 1959: 32).

Nayar men seem always to have chosen wives younger than themselves. A man ranked above his wife, who had to show respect to him. In the presence of her kin she remained standing before him and seldom spoke to him; she would not be seen talking to him in public outside her home. A woman never used her husband's name; she addressed and referred to him by plural honorific pronouns. Hypergamous marriage relationships were even more formal than those between Nayars. Caste rules of pollution prevented the husband from receiving food from his wife's kinsfolk. During the daytime, after taking his purifying bath in the morning, he was forbidden to touch her or any member of her family.

THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

The most peculiar characteristic of the Central Nayars is that although a form of marriage existed they did not institutionalize the elementary family of one man, one woman, and their children. This group was in no sense a legal, residential, commensal, productive, or distributive unit. An individual man had no legal rights in a particular wife and her children. He did not reside with them, did not eat regularly with them, did not produce with or for them, and he did not customarily distribute goods to his children. A woman had no legal rights in a particular man—only the right that one *or more* men admit paternity of her children. Similarly, a child correctly begotten was assured of legal paternity, but a group of men might fulfill this role and the child had no subsequent claims on any of them. It might perhaps be claimed that the group composed of the tāli tier, his ritual wife, and her children born subsequently received cere-

[9] "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are the legitimate offspring of both parents" (*Notes and Queries*, 1951: 110).

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWII Kerala AWII
North Kerala Nayar

Nayar: North Kerala

The Nayars of North Kerala live between the Chandragiri and the Kora rivers. This area lay north of the Calicut kingdom and had been conquered by the Kolattiri kings at some period before the fourteenth century (Logan, 1951, I: 283; Innes, 1908: 57). It then disintegrated into the small kingdoms of Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad. North Kerala was invaded from the Bednur kingdom of South Canara in the 1730's. It was later occupied by Muslim armies from Mysore between 1768 and 1792, after which it passed under British rule (Logan, 1951, I: 360, 399–473). This account deals with conditions before 1760, so far as these are known, and with the major changes of the nineteenth century.

Ecology

The mountains approach nearer to the sea in North Kerala than in Central Kerala. There are fewer stretches of lowland suitable for wet-rice cultivation, and gardens of fruits, nuts, vegetables, and spices on hillsides are more extensive. Since rice was the main subsistence crop, population density was lower than in Central Kerala. The houses of a village (*dēsam*) were scattered in gardens on hillsides surrounding a wet-rice flat in a valley. Villages were often separated by three to six miles of uncultivated scrub or jungle. Until the Mysoreans built roads after the 1760's, transport and communication by narrow mountain paths were difficult, especially in the heavy monsoons.

North Kerala had four major ports during the period of European trade—Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé, and Badagara (Hamilton, ed. 1727: 369–371). Pepper and other spices were exported from inland villages probably from Roman times, but villages were virtually self-sufficient for food until the mid-eighteenth century. After that time the Mysoreans' roads permitted greater import of goods both from the coast and from Mysore, and greater spatial mobility. In the nineteenth century cash-crop farming for export increased, as did imports of

4:Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

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CULTS OF THE DEAD AMONG THE NĀYARS

By E. Kathleen Gough

IN this paper I shall attempt both a sociological and a psychological analysis of Nāyar cults of the dead. That is to say, I shall try to relate the role-structure and social functions of the cults to those of legal and economic institutions, and to relate the emotional content of the cults to that of certain relationships among the living.

The Nāyars[1] are a high, matrilineal caste of landholders and salaried workers. Some four to seven matrilineal lineages of commoner Nāyars traditionally occupied the high caste area of a village. They served a Nāyar or Nambūdiri Brahman village headman, and had authority over tenants, artisans, and serfs of lower caste. The lineage was exogamous, had a depth of about ten to fifteen generations and was concerned in village government. But the more significant economic unit was a lineage segment (*taravād*), whose members jointly owned property including an ancestral house. The eldest man of this group was its legal guardian (*kāranavan*).

Before British rule began in 1792, the Malabar Coast comprised a number of kingdoms. I am concerned with Nāyars of villages in the former Cochin kingdom, in the center of the coast, and with those of villages in the former Kottayam kingdom in the north.

In Cochin, the country was relatively flat, fertile, and densely populated. The Nāyars were the professional military caste. For a part of each year they tended to be absent from the village in military training or war. Women remained on their ancestral estates under the legal guardianship of the *kāranavan* and were maintained by the work of tenants and serfs. Probably largely as a result of the relatively mobile military occupation of the men, plural marital unions were customary. A woman might have six or eight husbands of her own or a higher subcaste, and a man, any number of Nāyar wives of his own or a lower subcaste. Residence was duolocal: spouses lived separately in their natal homes and a husband visited his wife in her home at night. Exact physiological paternity was, clearly, often unknown, and in any case a man had no rights in nor obligations to his children. Among Nāyars of this area, therefore, contrary to Murdock's generalization,[2] the elementary family was not institutionalized as a legal, economic or residential unit.

In Kottayam, the terrain was mountainous and jungly, the area more sparsely populated, and the kingdom less centralized. The Nāyars were cultivating landowners and only occasional warriors. The hilly and jungly terrain and the sparsity of population made duolocal residence impracticable. In most cases a man took his wife to live in his ancestral household in avunculocal residence, and children were brought up until adolescence in the houses of their fathers. There was some polygyny, but polyandry was forbidden. Fathers had morally though not legally recognized rights in and

4: Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

obligations to their children and a strong affective bond with them. The *Karanavān* of their lineage segment was however the authority in important matters.

Both in Kottayam and in Cochin, Nāyar women were occasionally married to men of the highest, patrilineal caste of Nambūdiri Brahmans. Children of such unions were Nāyars, and rules of ritual pollution maintained distance between them and their higher caste fathers. The Nambūdiri father might not eat with his wife and children, and might not touch them during the daytime while in a state of ritual purity. Only the eldest son of a Nambūdiri house might marry a Nambūdiri wife and beget children for his own family.

British rule brought about the collapse of the Nāyar armies early in the nineteenth century. Probably as a result of this change, plural marriages gradually died out in Cochin. The lineage system persisted with little change until the turn of the century, but in both areas the employment of men in professional and wage work led to the development of privately owned property in addition to property owned jointly by the matrilineal group. The Malabar Marriage Act of 1896 permitted men to register their marriages and gave the children of such marriages rights in half the personal property of the father after his death. During this century, the greatly increased employment of men in salaried work, and the development of cash-crop farming, have brought about a partial disintegration of the matrilineage, and have tended toward the emergence of the elementary family as an economic and legal unit. Under the pressure of these changes, laws[3] were passed in 1933 and 1937 which required all men to register their marriages, gave rights of maintenance to their wives and children, and provided that the whole of a man's personal property be inherited by his wife and children. In addition, the laws permitted, though they did not require, equal division of the matrilineal estate on a per caput basis[4] between all members. Although some traditional households remain, it has now become fairly customary for a woman and her immature children jointly to separate their shares of property from those of the rest of their matrilineal group, and to set up a new establishment with the woman's husband. He, in turn, may have abstracted his single share of property from that of his own matrilineal group. Sometimes, the husband himself provides a new house for his elementary family from his own share of property and his private earnings. Sometimes the new house is provided from the property of the wife and children, who receive their husband and father into it as a resident and wage earner. Sometimes husband and wife pool their property and set up a joint establishment.

Given the modern heterogeneity of legal, economic, and residential arrangements, and given also variations in education, interests, and life experience, it is not surprising that cults of the dead reveal differential rates of change. I shall be chiefly concerned with the traditional cults, although these persist without change in only a few of the more traditionally patterned households—actually, in fifteen percent of Nāyar households in one Cochin village, and in thirteen percent in one village in Kottayam.

The Nāyars participate in three distinguishable categories of cults of the dead. The first comprises a collective cult, by the matrilineal property group, of the ghosts of matrilineal forebears, which I call lineage ghosts. This cult is non-Sanskritic. The second category comprises various kinds of offerings by individuals to the spirits of dead kinsfolk at funerals or on the anniversaries of deaths. These cults are Sanskritic in origin. The third category comprises various cults of the ghosts of persons who were not members of the Nāyar's own lineage; I call these alien ghosts. These cults,

4:Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

like the cult of lineage ghosts, are non-Sanskritic. I discuss the three categories of cults in that order, and then refer briefly to modern changes in the cults.

The Cult of Lineage Ghosts

Each traditional Nāyar house contains a room devoted to lineage ghosts. Within the shrine are placed small, low stools (*pīṭhams*). On each of these it is believed that a particular ghost comes to sit on the days when offerings are made.

In property groups of the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and district chiefs, which own more land than do commoner Nāyars, family histories recorded in palm leaf documents may contain the names and achievements of twenty or more *kāranavans* extending back over two or three hundred years. In such lineages, whose property groups divide less frequently than do those of commoner Nāyars, the *kāranavans'* spirits are housed in a special building in the courtyard south of the ancestral house. Commoner Nāyars care somewhat less for their ancestry. Sometimes they have only three or four stools for their lineage ghosts and remember by name only those who died within the last hundred years or whose lives were in some way remarkable. Remarkable *kāranavans* are those who fought bravely in battles or received honor from chief or king, those who earned property on behalf of their matrilineal groups, or those who died prematurely through accident, murder, epidemic or suicide.

Regular offerings are made only to *kāranavans*, for only *kāranavans* hold legal authority and only their names tend to appear in documents which survive for posterity. On the advice of the astrologer, however, a *taravād* may, in emergency, propitiate the ghost of an ancestress or of a man who died before becoming *kāranavan*. But such ghosts are always those who died within the lifetime of living members.

The lineage ghosts are regularly propitiated[8] on the new moon days of Karkidagam (July-August) and Tulām (October-November). Food is cooked in the kitchen by women of the matrilineal household, and a large portion is placed on a plantain leaf for each of the ghosts. It includes curried meat and vegetables, fried paddy, beaten rice, fuits, and sweet puddings of various kinds. Toddy and arrack were traditionally served along with the meal. If a dead *kāranavan* is known to have enjoyed special foods during life, he receives a large portion of these foods. Occasionally, even in the past, individual Nāyars have been vegetarians. The spirits of vegetarian *kāranavans* may not be served with meat and are housed in a separate shrine. When the dishes are prepared, they are carried quickly to the shrine so that the ghosts may partake of their essence before others have tasted or smelled them. The living *kāranavan* places the leaves before the stools in the presence of men junior to him in the property group and then closes the door of the shrine. Age-rank is observed in making the offerings. For each spirit, in addition to its own leaf, is briefly offered the food later placed before the stools of spirits junior to it. Similarly, the vegetables of vegetarian ghosts are first offered to meat eaters who were senior to them, and the vegetables (but not the meat) cooked for meat eating ghosts are first offered to vegetarian ghosts who were their seniors. After a few minutes the *kāranavan* reopens the door and distributes the food, to be eaten by all members of the *taravād*. Women take no part in offering the food and may not enter the ancestral shrine on this day. They are also forbidden to enter it during menstrual and birth pollutions, and all members are forbidden entry during the fifteen days of pollution following a death.

Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the *taravād* might

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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Nayar

[P. iii]

PREFATORY NOTE.

For the benefit of those who have not seen the first article of this series of notes on some of the people of Malabar, I wish to repeat that it is an "attempt to describe the people as they actually are, and not as they are supposed to be in the books on Hinduism, which, for the most part, tell us of *Hinduism as it is not* in Southern India. Books have not been consulted or used anywhere, except where the fact has been notified." It is a product of original work during three years and a half spent in Malabar. My thanks are offered to the many gentlemen, natives of Malabar, who have in the kindest manner helped me—Mr. M. Krishnan (Malayalam Translator to Government), Messrs. O. Vasava Menon, C. P. Raman Menon, U. Balakrishnan Nâyar, M. Raman Menon, T. K. Gopal Panniker, T. Kannan, Achutan Nâyar, and many others. Also I have to thank Mr. Badcock of Tellicherry for assistance. The proofs have been through the hands of several Nâyars, and every precaution has been taken to ensure accuracy of facts.

[1901.] F. FAWCETT.

291 564 caste, is not supposed to wear his cloth below his knees. Now-a-days, when there is a general levelling up, the inferior races occupying a position they never held before, when people speak of caste as if it were a fanciful arrangement of the social fabric which it would be an excellent thing to destroy, forgetting that, fundamentally, it rests on racial differentiation, we see those of castes inferior to the Nâyar wearing their cloths to the ground—in the towns that is, where the sway of modern officialdom and education is felt. But, were a man of inferior caste to wear his cloth to the ground, away out in the district where the old order has not changed much, he would soon be made to repent having done what is believed to be an infringement of the privileges of the Nâyar. He would probably be well beaten, and might have his house burnt. The single cloth (mundu) constitutes the ordinary dress. No turban is worn. It is wrong for a [293] Nâyar to cover his head. But he may use an umbrella, and invariably does so when walking in the sun, for he is very susceptible to its rays. The cloth must be fastened at the waist in a certain way. Those of every caste tie or fasten their cloth round the loins in a certain way; people of no two castes tie the cloth alike.

Women.—A short cloth is worn somewhat tight round the loins, and over it is worn another cloth from the waist to below the knee. Nothing is worn above waist. When one sees women of the Nâyar caste on the roads (they are *never* to be seen in the towns), or at the festivals or other large gatherings, they are wearing a cloth loosely covering the upper portion of the body. In Malabar, where there is prevalent the idea that no respectable woman covers her breast, there has crept in lately, chiefly amongst those who have travelled, a feeling of shame in respect of this custom of dress. Dress is, of course, a conventional affair, and it will be matter for regret should false ideas of shame supplant those of natural dignity such as one sees expressed in the carriage and bearing of the well-bred Nâyar lady.

121 It will be most convenient to deal with the Nâyars as a body under such heads as marriage, customs, etc. Here we are concerned mainly with physical measures and general appearance, under which come dress and ornament. What has been said about dress may be taken as descriptive of all the clans. Before leaving the Kiriattil Nâyars it will be well to note the names of some of those actually measured.

[291] [564] [115]

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

unsuitability to the time in which they exist, which is apparent amongst those societies more liable to change.

But whatever the reasons may be, the relations between the sexes in Malabar are unusually happy. They seem to be more than commonly natural. The most obvious reason for their being so is that they are less influenced by considerations of property than elsewhere. The desire to maintain property within the family is the curse of all natural relations between the sexes. What strange customs has it not put upon mankind! We have some strange examples of these in Southern India, as when a woman is married to the door-post of the house, and the house owner begets children on her to inherit his property; or when a man marries his child to a woman, and himself begets children on her, and the individual who stands in the position of father may be but a few years older than the son. But we need not look farther than Europe for anomalous customs which inhibit the working of the law of natural selection. Malabar is fairly free from unfortunate customs, and it is perfectly fair to say the marital relation amongst the Nâyars is more than commonly natural.

A description of the ceremonies and formalities connected with the marital connexion will now be attempted. The first of these, described as "most peculiar, distinctive, and unique," is the Tâli-kettu-kalyânam. The details of this ceremony vary in different parts of Malabar, but the ceremony itself, in some form, is essential, and must be performed for every Nâyar girl before she attains puberty. Tâli-kettu-kalyânam means marriage by tying the tâli, or ceremony of tying the tâli, a small golden ornament, worn on the neck, the ordinary badge of marriage amongst the Dravidian peoples.

The following account was given by M.R.Ry. K. R. Krishna Menon, retired Sub-Judge, to the Commission:—

"The Tâli-kettu-kalyânam is somewhat analogous to what a Dévadâsi (dancing girl attached to pagodas) of other countries undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal families, and those of certain Edaprabhûs, a Kshatriya,—and among the Chárna sect, a Nedungádi,—is invited to the girl's house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and in the presence of friends and castemen ties tâli round her neck, and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble. Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined

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Female Initiation Rites on the Malabar Coast

Curl Bequest Prize Essay, 1953[*]

E. KATHLEEN GOUGH

INTRODUCTION

UNTIL TWENTY YEARS AGO, the *tālikettukalyāṇam* (*tāli*-tying marriage) was performed by almost all the castes of Malabar below Brahmans and above the lowest 'exterior' castes.[1] I confine this discussion to four groups with different kinship systems: the matrilineal, uxorilocal Nayars of South Malabar District and Cochin; the matrilineal, virilocal Nayars of North Malabar District; the matrilineal, virilocal Tiyyars of North Malabar District; and the double unilineal, patrilocal Tiyyars of South Malabar and Cochin.[2]

This girls' initiation ceremony was apparently first described in 1510 by Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese traveller. Since that date, there have been descriptions of the ceremony by other Portuguese, Dutch, and East India Company writers, and in the past sixty years much controversy between Indian and British anthropologists about its origin and meaning. Yet no one, as far as I know, has recognized its significance in terms of the total kinship systems of the castes who performed it.[3] My first task has therefore been to describe the *tāli*-rite in each caste and to discuss its social function in the kinship system; I do so in Parts I to IV of the essay. In these, I have used the reports of previous writers which, since the rite died out about twenty years ago, are in many cases better than those I collected from informants. At the same time, for a full interpretation of the rite, I found it necessary to incorporate some of my own general field data on Nayar and Tiyyar kinship, collected in 1947-9. My field work was carried out in a South Malabar village (Walluvanād subdivision) for six months, in a Cochin village for eight months, and in a North Malabar village (Kottayam subdivision) for eight months.[4]

Having analyzed, as far as I was able, the social function of the ceremony, I found that, as perhaps with all rites, many of its features were not explicable in terms of social function and of conscious motivations. While it was possible to show, in a general way, how in each case the ceremony was in harmony with the pattern of kinship relations in these groups, it was not possible to explain sociologically why certain persons should take part in the rites, rather than other persons, why certain material objects should be used, and indeed, why it should be necessary to perform this ceremony at all. It seemed to me that the answer to these problems lay in unconscious motivations common to the members of these castes, and could

[*] [Two Curl Bequest Prizes were awarded for the year 1953, one to the writer of the present essay and the other to Mr H. N. C. Stevenson, O.B.E., for his essay 'Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System', which appeared in the last volume of the JOURNAL. – ED.]

[1] For a brief analysis of modern changes in Nayar kinship see Gough (1952). For a fuller analysis of modern changes in the Tiyyar systems see Aiyappan (1944).

[2] The Tiyyars are called Iravas or Chovāns in some parts of South Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore. For convenience, I use 'Tiyyars' throughout.

[3] Dr Aiyappan (1943; 1944, pp. 159–61) has made the most comprehensive study of Malabar *tāli*-rites. He concludes that in most of the castes the *tāli*-rite is 'nothing more than an initiatory rite, preliminary to attaining marriageable status'. While I agree with him, I think that this conclusion begs the question and does not explain the function or motivations of the rite.

[4] My field work was made possible by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

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be elucidated only in terms of a psycho-analytic hypothesis. Part V of the essay is therefore an attempt to try out a psycho-analytic approach to Hindu ritual, and to show, with reference to one ceremony, that this approach permits a deeper analysis than is possible if we limit ourselves to a discussion of social function.

The use by anthropologists of psycho-analytic findings to interpret primitive myth and ritual is familiar from modern American writings; it has scarcely been accepted by British anthropologists. I admit that, for anthropologists, psycho-analytic theories must in the long run depend for their authority on analyses of a significant number of individuals in the society whose symbolism it is hoped to interpret. Such data are not, however, at present forthcoming, and in many Indian groups it is doubtful if they will be forthcoming before the myths and rites have died out. In the meantime, as I hope to show, the results of psycho-analytic work in the West can give us insights into the probable unconscious motives behind primitive religious practices, and allow us to formulate new if tentative hypotheses on the connexions between the kinship structure of a group and its religious symbolism.

This essay therefore, while confined to the analysis of one ceremony, fulfils the terms of the Curl Bequest Competition, since it incorporates in a single theory field data recently collected on four Malabar kinship systems; uses the material of other anthropologists (see Aiyappan 1942, 1944; Dube 1953) who have worked on Indian initiation rites in the past ten years, to advance a sociological interpretation of these rites; and tests, with reference to these rites, certain hypotheses of the British school of psycho-analysts put forward in recent years.[1]

Part I. The Nayar *Tāli*-Rite in South Malabar and Cochin

This area is in the centre of the Malabar Coast, south of the Kora River and north of the Travancore–Cochin boundary. Before 1792, it comprised the mutually hostile kingdoms of the Zamorin of Calicut, the Raja of Walluvanād, and the Maharaja of Cochin. The area was temporarily conquered by the Zamorins in the late 15th century and Cochin and Walluvanād were made feudatory kingdoms. Probably for this reason, the Nayar sub-castes of Walluvanād and Cochin correspond closely to those of Calicut, since they owed their existence to a political system common to these three kingdoms. By contrast, the kingdoms to the north and south, where the Zamorins failed to penetrate, had different political systems and correspondingly different hierarchies of Nayar sub-castes. Today, the Nayars of South Malabar and Cochin still show greater cultural similarity, feel greater unity, and intermarry more freely than they do with Nayars to the north or to the south.

At the head of each of the central kingdoms was a royal matrilineage. Being at enmity, the royal lineages disputed for rank, would not intermarry, and, though exogamous, formed each a separate caste. Each however acknowledged itself inferior to the Nambūdiri Brahmans (landlords and priests) whose separate caste-organization extended throughout the Malabar Coast, and who were above and outside the laws of the separate kingdoms.

Below the royal lineages came the Sāmantans, chiefs (*nāduvāris*) of districts (*nāds*). These owed allegiance to the Raja and had administrative control over the next sub-caste, of Kiriyattil Nayars (called Vellayma Nayars in Cochin), the headmen (*desavāris*) of villages (*desams*). Below the Kiriyattils came three parallel sub-castes: Sūdra Nayars, Charna Nayars (respectively called Illath Sūdras and Swaroopattil Sūdras in Cochin), and Pallichans. Sūdra Nayars were hereditary tenants and retainers in villages where the land was owned by a patrilineal family of Nambūdiri Brahmans. Charna Nayars were retainers in villages owned by *nāduvāri* or *desavāri* lineages. Pallichans owed similar allegiance in villages owned by a branch of the

[1] For the psycho-analytic interpretation of this essay I am chiefly indebted to Freud (1913, 1918, 1919), Ernest Jones (1931, 1951), Melanie Klein (1932), and Roheim (1950).

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much the same part as did its maternal and affinal kinsmen to a patrilineal lineage in the lower castes. Individual *enangar* were moreover often of course affines (*bandhu*) to members of the lineage. But among Nayars, the marriage-tie was so slender that individual affinal bonds were not, it seems, strong enough to unite the lineage to the rest of the sub-caste group. This was achieved instead by a hereditary relationship between lineages as groups, which persisted irrespective of the making and breaking of marriage ties between them.

In these retainer sub-caste groups the *tāli* must be tied by an *enangan*. Each girl had a separate bridegroom, usually a youth who might have already formed *sambandham* relationships of his own. The *tāli*-tiers were chosen at a local assembly. The choice was made by the village astrologer, who compared the horoscopes of the girls with those of suitable young men and fixed the auspicious date and time for the ceremony to take place.

In Kiriyattil, Samantan, and royal lineages, whose women frequently or invariably married men of higher sub-caste, the *tāli*-tier was chosen from the appropriate higher sub-caste. Women of village headmen's lineages were commonly 'tied' by men of their district headman's lineage, and Sāmantan women and Cochin princesses by Nambūdiri Brahmans. Calicut princesses had the *tāli* tied by men of Kodungalur, one of the ancient ruling lineages which had been conquered by Calicut. Similarly, Walluvanād princesses had the *tāli* tied by men of the lineage of Beypore, a more ancient and therefore higher-ranking lineage than their own of an adjacent small kingdom which was also feudatory to Calicut. In these sub-castes the 'bridegroom' was usually an elderly man.

The account which follows was given by Sūdra Nayars of Pālakkara, the Cochin village where I worked. In Pālakkara, the *tāli*-rite in its full form has not been performed for twenty-two years, and, like many of the traditional rites of Nayars, it is doubtful if it will ever be performed again. This description refers to this most recently held ceremony, at which the *tāli*s were tied for nineteen girls, ranging in age from two to twelve, of a lineage comprising twelve property-groups.

The ceremony required the co-operation of the whole village, which at that time was coterminous with the *tara*. It was held in the lineage's oldest ancestral house. A shed of bamboo and palm-fronds was erected before the house, the first corner-post, of areca-palm wood, being planted ceremonially by the carpenter. A man of the temple-servant caste of Kurups drew a picture of the Malabar goddess Bhagavadi on the floor of the shed, of the type drawn in the village Bhagavadi temple at festivals to the goddess. Nayar men of the village then went and cut down a branch of the milk-exuding tree of Bhagavadi from near the village temple. This they planted near the corner-post in the floor of the shed, in order, informants said, 'to bring Bhagavadi to the *tarawād* and set up a temple in the house'. A plank of wood of the same tree was set in the shed for each girl to sit on in turn.

All *enangar* of the lineage, and representatives of every other Nayar house in the village, attended the four days of ceremonies. On the first morning, the girls went in procession to the shrine of the lineage's *dharma devi* (goddess of moral law). This goddess, represented by a stone image, is the lineage's private Bhagavadi. She is propitiated annually with cooked food to ward off sickness and misfortune. Similar offerings were made now, and the procession returned. Young men of the lineage then went to meet the bridegrooms, who arrived on elephants with their male age-mates, accompanied by music. At the gate married women of the lineage met them carrying brass plates each containing a lit wick, paddy, rice, and a spray of coconut flowers. The bridegrooms' feet were washed by brothers of the girls and they were seated in the marriage-shed. Near the picture of Bhagavadi were laid paddy and rice, coconut flowers, the sacred brass lamp of the household, and a tray of eight auspicious objects (*ashtamangal(yam)*. These included a woman's loin-cloth, a rouge-box, a bell-metal mirror, an arrow, a coconut-spray, rice, paddy and a lit wick; they figure also in the Nambūdiri

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SOME ASPECTS OF NĀYAR LIFE.

By K. M. Panikkar.

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Note.—I have not attempted here to write anything like a detailed study of the Social Life and Customs of the Nāyars. My purpose in this Essay has been mainly to put together a few facts which do not seem to have been sufficiently dealt with by previous writers. It is therefore offered rather as supplementary notes than as an original contribution.

I have everywhere depended upon my own observations as to matters of detail. Wherever I have ventured either to suggest new interpretations or to question old theories my authorities generally are eighteenth-century Malayalam poets, who describe the Nāyar Society of the time with great accuracy and detail. My debt to various anthropological classics is evident, and I have acknowledged it everywhere in footnotes.

I.—Introductory.

The Nāyar country extends traditionally from Gokarnam to Cape Camorin along the littoral of the Arabian Sea. The geographical position of the country is very important. The Western Ghats, which extend from near Bombay down to Cape Camorin, attain near the Malabar country the character of a mountain range studded

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He had criminal and civil jurisdiction and the right to claim military service from the Nāyars under him. The *Nadu Vazhis* kept a local force varying between five hundred and one thousand men, which they were obliged to put into the field at the command of their Rajah. The *Nadu Vazhis* were kept under control by the Rajah when he was able to do so. But in any case they were bound to fight for him. Below these *Nadu Vazhis* were *Desa Vazhis* (lords of the Manor). They had the right of keeping a *Kalari* or a military academy. In each village there was one *Desa Vazhi* (sometimes more), who was called master (*Asān*) by the Nāyars. He was their military preceptor in peace time and their leader in war time.

The principal business of the *Desa Vazhi* was to train the young men of *Desa* in his *Kalari*. All Nāyar boys after twelve were supposed to attend the *Kalari* and learn boxing, fencing, sword play, military formation, and the ordinary rules of warfare. For such training the *Desa Vazhi* was not paid. After eighteen the boys were not supposed to attend the *Kalari*, but were required to be ready to start for war at a day's notice.

The *Kalaris* are still in existence. Even now the Nāyar young men who do not go to English schools get some sort of a training with imitation swords and shields, because swords are prohibited by the Arms Act. In certain families one male member has to be proficient in this art so as to be able to teach the others. The *Kalaris*, though now visited by people only for the extreme beauty of their architecture, are still used by the Nāyars of the *Desas* as places of worship.

On the festival days in the village temple the Nāyars, who have been thus trained, even now hold a review in martial array (*vēla*). In Trivandrum, which is the capital of the Maharajah of Travancore, this feature is very prominent. In other places there are still *Patayanis* (*Pata*—war, *ani*—to get ready). All the Nāyars of the surrounding districts assemble, and the ceremonies which in former days stood for military manœuvres are held with great enthusiasm.

The centre of all the martial and, consequently, of the social life of the Nāyars is, therefore, the *Desa*. In each village there is a temple owned by the community. The temple is generally self-supporting, and occasionally very rich. The temple authorities are appointed by the village. The power is generally vested in the *Pramanis*, or the chief men. In each village there are certain families who have the right of being consulted in all matters connected with it. The head of these *Pramanis* is the Lord of the Manor.

In describing the organization of the village, it is better to take one practical example which is typical. Kavalam is such a village. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the description of the organization of that village.

The village is supposed to consist of one hundred and fifty houses. This is the traditional number, but at least fifty of these have emigrated. But though they live in other parts of the country they are still considered to belong to this organization. In all the ceremonies that require the sanction of the village the emigrant,

[i.e., The Nadu Vazhi — Analyst]

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ars on the moral sense of either the man or the woman. The idea that monogamy 595
ecessarily means a higher stage of culture is indeed one of those *a priori* deductions 562
hich, though incapable of proof, are still held with dogmatic reverence. Even
he curious and very interesting fact that among the Mormons (whose great fault
as polygamy, according to those moralists who include monogamy among the
Categorical Imperatives), it was the women who fought most strenuously for the
aintenance of this custom, which they considered to be their most cherished privilege.
t is an indubitable fact that where polygamy exists it is the women who are its
hief advocates. The men, on the other hand, consider it a great bother. I have
eard many rich men to whom proposals were made for a third or fourth marriage
ay "sufficient unto me are the evils of one wife."[1]

On the whole I am inclined to say that women in Malabar among the Nāyars 562
t least enjoy, relatively to women elsewhere in India, greater liberty, with regard
o individual conduct, family relationship and social life. This no doubt is due to
he influence of matrilineal customs.

IV.—THE MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AMONG THE NĀYARS.

The marriage ceremonies of the Nāyars have always been peculiar. Anthro- 12/
ologists who have studied the Nāyars have, on the whole, failed to understand [114]
he significance of these customs. In this connection I propose to speak only of
hree chief points. First, *The Talikettu Kalyanam* (or the matrimonial ceremony
f tying the Tali); secondly, the *Sambandham* (or marital relationship); and thirdly,
olyandry.

The *Talikettu Kalyanam*[2] is generally performed on a batch of girls of the 588
ame matrilineal family. The age of the eldest girl is generally eleven and rarely
hirteen. The idea is that this ceremony should take place before the girl attains
uberty.[3] But it is not only the children of the same family that can have a *Talikettu*
ith the others. The daughter of a male member of the family who belongs to an
angar clan or who is too poor to be able to afford the costly ceremony of *Talikettu*,
an, with the permission of the *village community*, be placed in a separate seat and her
ali also may be tied at the same time.

When the ceremony could be performed, even when a girl is only six months
d, it happens that in a *Talikettu Kalyanam* all the girls below eleven are disposed
f at the same time. Therefore it takes at least another twelve years for a new batch

[1] See Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, chapter on Mormonism.

[2] The *Tali* is a piece of metal, generally silver or gold, which stands for marriage in all the communities who acknowledge Hinduism.

[3] Among the Nāyars social puberty differs considerably in point of time from physiological [881]
uberty. It is a matter of great importance that the former should precede the latter. Any [558]
mily in which a girl attains her physiological puberty, as evidenced by her first menses, before
e had attained her social puberty, is socially outside the pale.

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291 184 richer classes go in for Benares silk. This is wound round the loins and extends to the feet. The upper part of the body is seldom covered by the commoner folk, though most of them carry a second piece of cloth with them. Among the titled classes of the Nāyars it is customary to put on a long piece of laced muslin on the upper part of their body.

Mostly the Nāyars go barefoot, though expensive and elaborately-made sandals are used by the richer classes.

824 302 *Scents, Flowers, etc.*—The Nāyars use a lot of scented things. Sandal-wood paste, which has a beautiful aroma, is generally used on various parts of the body. Musk is also used, generally by ladies. Jasmine is the favourite flower. It is worn in clusters by women in their hair. It is very difficult to find an old Nāyar house which has not got a jasmine plant in its garden. Its scent is delightful, and when strung together as a garland it makes the most delightful, as well as the most welcome, present to a lady. Jasmine is also strewn in the bridal bed.

415 412 326 *Household Utensils.*—Household utensils, plates, pots, etc., are mostly made of bronze. Very few Nāyar families have got what is spoken of as household silver. The material they use is generally made with great taste, but the praise for this does not belong to them. The workers in bronze are hereditary craftsmen. Their life is devoted to designing and making these things, and naturally they have acquired great efficiency in it. The only praise that the Nāyars deserve for using them lies in the fact that, in spite of a strong temptation to go in for aluminium ware, which is much cheaper, they persist in using the costly, but better made and more artistic bronze things.

121 178 What is the future of this people? Will they become patrilineal and merge into the vast ocean of Hindu population, or will they remain matrilineal, while adjusting their social relationships and economic organisations to suit the changing conditions of life in India? Will they break up their *Tharawad* (the joint family) and abandon the primitive system of classificatory relationship? These are questions difficult to answer, but some new tendencies may here be noticed.

178 611 One thing I must say to start with. There is no chance of the system of matriliny undergoing any fundamental change in Malabar. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, the economic interest is too large to submit to any change in the order of things dictated by purely theoretical reasons. Even if we could establish that the patrilineal system of life is superior to the matrilineal, the change from the latter to the former would not take place in Malabar, because it would mean a social revolution of some magnitude. Secondly, as long as there is the Brahmin marriage system it is not only the Nāyars that are interested in its upkeep, but also the Nampudiris.

178 564 Another reason is this. There is in Malabar what may be called a strong caste war. There is first of all the Nampudiri class, mostly landlords with great social and religious influence. Their rivalry is not of great importance. There are, then, the Nāyars. Thirdly, we have the Syrian Christians, who are an extremely intelli-

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[p. 17]

The Nayar Family in a Disintegrating Matrilineal System[1]

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Introduction

In this short essay, I will present one case of the disintegration of a Nayar *tarwad* (matrilineal joint family), based on the materials collected by myself.

The general institutional system of a traditional Nayar *tarwad* is already well known, and has been much discussed recently by anthropologists, including K. Gough.[2] Here I state it briefly as a preface to the main discussion. A traditional Nayar *tarwad* was a property group consisting of a matrilineal lineage exclusively, headed and represented by the senior male member, called *karanavan*. Normally the members of a *tarwad* formed a distinguishable domestic unit. Spouses of the members of a *tarwad* resided in the *tarwad* where they were born, and a husband visited his wife at her *tarwad* at night and returned early morning.[3] The father had no duty or obligation on his own children, instead, the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of the offspring of the female members of the *tarwad*.

The Nayars are one of the Hindu upper castes in Kerala, next to the Nambudri Brahman, and traditionally the majority of the Nayars had been land holders or managers, not cultivators. On such a social and economic base, the function of the *tarwad* had been maintained. Various factors have led to the disintegration of the *tarwad* system, the major cause of which, I think, was the economic changes accompanied by modernization since the beginning of the

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1 This essay is one of the outcomes of my field work on matrilineal systems in India (1955–56) carried out by the generous grant of the Elin Wagner Foundation in Sweden, to which my profound acknowledgement goes. Also I am very thankful for the help of Dr. John Mogey.

2 E. Kathleen Gough: "Changing kinship usages in the setting of political and economic change among the Nayars of Malabar," *J. R. Anthrop. Inst.* 82, pp. 71–87; "A comparison of incest prohibitions and the rules of exogamy in three matrilineal groups of the Malabal," *International Achives of Ethnography*, Vol. XLVI, Part I, 1952, pp. 82–105.

3 The *karanavan* was an exception: he could take his wife and children in his *tarwad*. In North Malabar, not only the *karanavan*, but also other male members used to take their wives and children to their *tarwad*. However, these wives, including children, had to leave their husband's *tarwad*, as soon as their husband died.

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19th century. In this connection, I was much interested in studying court records and various documents, including *the Nayar Regulation II, 1925, Travancore*, and *the Malabar Marumakkathayam Act of 1933*, which legally marked the end of the functional Nayar *tarwad* system. Actual partition of an individual *tarwad* occured earlier, or later, than these acts.[1] However the present discussion is concerned mainly with the internal situation of the *tarwad* as it disintegrated, the discussion of external factors and causes of the disintegration of the *tarwad* are omitted.

The process of the disintegration of the *tarwad* can be summarized in terms of the essential elements which constitute the functional body of a *tarwad:*

A. members of a matrilinial lineage exclusively
B. co-residential (domestic) unit
C. property owning unit
D. headed by the *karanavan*
E. Ceremonial unit.

In the disintegration of the *tarwad*, the group loses these elements gradually. The element which is lost first seems to be *B*. A population which exceeds the limit of the accomodation of a *tarwad* building, results in residential separation of small segments of a matrilineal group who have the same grandmother, or grand-grandmother, called *tawari*. Such a group, residing in a separate household, in the course of time tends to develop as a temporal economic unit. Though the ancestral property is held in common by all members of the *tarwad* together, the residential sub-group would become a semi-independent productive and consumption unit: the income would not be pooled into the *tarwad* but consumed by the members of each group. Hence the function of the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad*, the property group, becomes incomplete.

At the same time, when the residential unit becomes smaller, it would give chances for the inclusion of spouses and the element A would be shaken. The cohabitation of wife and husband leads to the inclusion of nonmatrilineal members in a matrilineal residential group. These factors bring on economic and psychological confusion in the duties and obligations of a *tarwad* member. Thus, by the destruction of elements *A*, *B*, and *C*, the status of the *karanavan* becomes ambiguous. There occur various disputes between the *karanavan* and other members on the rights of the *tarwad* property.

This situation is enhanced by the fact that an increase of members who have an independent income without depending on the *tarwad* property, form an independent household with his wife and children. This situation makes it difficult to maintain the *tarwad* as a property unit, and also infringes the function of the *karanavan*. In fact the actual contribution of the father who was not the legal guardian of his children is significant in the failure of the role of the *karanavan* for the matrilineal members. Thus at last a *tarwad* has no alternative

1. A report of my study on these legal documents, including materials given in this paper, was published in Japanese: "On the disintegration of the Nayar *tarwad*," *Memoirs of the Institute for Oriental Culture*, University of Tokyo, Vol. 14, pp. 1–131, 1958.

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except to cease to function, and to divide the *tarwad* property among individual members. Theoretically the loss of the elements *A*, *B*, *C* and *D* marks the end of the *tarwad* institution. Nevertheless, the *tarwad* is still conceptualized as a distinctive social and ceremonial group by the element *E*, in spite of the loss of all other elements.

In 1956 (March-June) when I studied the Nayar, most of the *tarwad* in Kerala had already ceased to exist as a functional body. In a large building named *tarwad* where once lived more than fifty members of a matrilineal family, I found only a few members: such as an old mother and her daughter with her husband and children. The members of each *tarwad* were dispersed, forming independent small households each with a spouse and children, having already partitioned the *tarwad* property. Many of the older generation who are aged fifty and the head (father) of the household consisting of an elementary family, were born in a *tarwad*, and had experiences of the *tarwad* life. They are the people who lived through the dramatic stage of the disintegration of the *tarwad*. Their life history itself reflects the great changes in the Nayar matrilineal system.

It is extremely interesting to study through these living members the process, by which the members of a *tarwad* organized on a strict matrilineal principle, without allowing cohabitation of husband and wife, gradually reorganized into many individual elementary families in the course of half a century. The disintegration of the Nayar system as a whole took about two centuries but it seems that the actual disintegration of an individual *tarwad* is about half a century. The following discussion deals with how individual members acted at various stages of the disintegration of the *tarwad;* and what the changes of the matrilineal system actually mean to those individuals who are involved; and what are the consequences of the disintegration of the *tarwad*.

Marayil Tarwad

The *tarwad* which I have chosen for study is named Marayil, and one of the Nayar *tarwad* in Ernaklum, Cochin. This *tarwad* had many advantages for my purposes. The majority of the members of the *tarwad*, who now form many different households, still reside near each other, within the thirty minutes walk. The number of the descendants of the foundress of the *tarwad* amounts to 94 altogether in May 1956, ranging through seven generations. Many *tarwad* were much bigger in numbers, and deeper in generations, than this. Another advantage is that it represents a *tarwad* of a typical upper middle class among the Nayar caste in this area: present occupations of these members are government officials, advocates, teachers, etc. They have very friendly relationships with many other Nayars in this area, and are thought of as respectable people. The husbands, at every generation, are all Nayars, without a single case of a marriage with a Nambudri Brahman, as is common among the upper class Nayar in this area, nor with a Irawa, the caste below the Nayar.

Marayil *tarwad* was founded around 1830. The first partition by which the

[text continues on p. 21]

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AW11 Kerala AW11

Preface

THE TECHNO-ECONOMIC Survey of Kerala, conducted at the request of the State Government of Kerala, is one of the last few in the series of Techno-Economic Surveys of the various States of India undertaken by the National Council of Applied Economic Research. For some time past this small State has been attracting increasing attention of the public. Although Kerala has come into limelight on account of its political turmoils, the basic problems which the State faces are primarily economic in nature. The acute intensity of its unemployment aggravated by increased population pressure, the relatively lower per capita income of the people of the State, and highly limited scope for extension of cultivable area, pose a challenging task for the economic planners.

The main objective of the Techno-Economic Survey of Kerala, as in the case of similar surveys for other States, has been to assess technically feasible and economically viable potential for growth in the different sectors of the State economy over the coming decade. The first step towards this objective was to prepare an outline of the present structure of the economy and make an assessment of the existing physical and human resources of the State. A team of economists and technical experts was constituted for this purpose. The preliminary work on the project was started early in 1960. Relevant data were collected and the members of the survey team discussed the problems and potentialities in different fields, with a number of knowledgeable persons in the State. A number of working papers dealing with problems and potentialities in respect of various aspects of the economy were also prepared. Technical Appraisal Reports analysing growth potential in different sectors were then prepared by the technical members of the team.

The Preliminary Economic Report was ready by September 1961 and it was sent to the State Government for comments. The final report as printed here brings together the material contained in the working papers and the Appraisal Reports. The Appraisal Reports contain a detailed technical analysis of each of the major fields of development, e.g., Industry, Power, Transport, etc. The Economic Report, on the other hand, aims at presenting a broad and coordinated picture of the outline of the probable growth of the State Economy. It indicates the main lines along which future development of the State should proceed and highlights the strategy required for achieving a rapid growth of the State economy.

The economy of Kerala is marked by a number of distinctive features. It is the most thickly populated State in India with an average density per square mile being over three times the all-India average. In addition, the rate of growth of population has been noticeably higher in Kerala than in the other parts of India. A high density of population combined with a fast growth of population has been responsible

To 162 this case. But as Rivers has very well pointed out—"which comes first?" It is the old problem of the egg and the hen. Do they kill off their little girls because they wish to remain polyandrous, or are they polyandrous because they have more men than women owing to the practice of female infanticide? If the latter, the fact that they can steal one another's women would be another solution to the problem, so that again the demographic reasons seem to be insufficient.

To 121 Ti 121 K 121 Being unsatisfied with these explanations of polyandry given by various authors, I decided to find out from the people themselves why they are polyandrous. I do not think this has been done before. Most people find out about polyandry and then they try to think up some explanation for it, but no one has gone and asked the people themselves. Of course, when I checked the scientific explanations against their ideas, I got various answers.

To 595 829 Ti 595 829 There was no other answer from the Todas about the Mahabarata than that which I have already discussed. As far as the economic reasons are concerned, the Tibetans did say yes, they lived in poor surroundings and that is why they are polyandrous. Demographic reasons (that there are more men than women) were never mentioned, while sociological reasons such as frequent traveling (one brother having to remain at home with the wife) were mentioned often. But I was struck by the fact that, of the 100 answers I got, at least 95 were quite different from all the scientific explanatio

To 829 595 121 Ti 829 595 121 The usual answer I got was, "We are polyandrous so that our wives will not quarrel." The Todas even said that they are polyandrous because they do not want the *brothers* to quarrel with one another. And I must say that I found this explanation by the people themselves much more convincing, from a psychological point of view, than the academic explanations of certain authors. Basing my own view on the answers of the people themselves, I

To 829 595 121 182 T 829 595 121 182 K [121] would give the following interpretation of the polyandrous systems found: It seems to me that polyandry is "not necessarily a primitive institutional form of marriage, but that it is due to the psychological reaction of individuals living in communities subject to environmentally poor and insecure economic conditions, persisting, in the case of the Tibetans, through isolation from other communities, or, in the case of the Todas, as a type of defense mechanism against invasion by other cultures." I have not included the Tiyas in this definition because I do not know them sufficiently and would like to go more thoroughly into their polyandry before giving an interpretation of it.

Ti 595 114 212 Now, if I take this definition, instance by instance, I shall be able to interpret exactly what I mean by it. When I first say that polyandry is "not necessarily a primitive institutional form of marriage," I mean that, for instance, the Tibetans are all literate and educated people, with whom you can speak quite freely, who have a very pronounced sense of reality and do not in any way seem like a primitive people. It thus looks as if polyandry were a system entirely outside of the usual evolutionary stages of marriage, in which anthropology puts the matriarchal before the patriarchal system.

To 595 114 [182] [593] Next, I say that polyandry is "due to the psychological reaction of individuals living in communities subject to environmentally poor and economically insecure conditions," by which I mean, living in a physical environment which leads to a miserable economy. This economy makes

Ti 595 114 [182] [593] them very interdependent, within each family, upon the help of each other, and this interdependence, in turn, which is stressed very highly in these families because of the necessity of sticking together under the difficult physical conditions, calls for less aggression among the members of the family itself and among groups of them. It seems to me that this stress on the condemnation of aggression is such that even something approaching incest

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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of the group with B; they are the claims A has upon *a* and her children being expressed by A's children. It is these claims of the brothers and sisters upon each other which are the fundamental principle Dumont has detected as the common background in South Indian kinship. I am concerned neither with debunking the role of the "alliance" nor with defending the "principle of the unity of siblings," but merely with examining this idea of the "transfer of affinity" from generation to generation. Notice, however, that this formulation permits us to understand the formal customary background of a sister's daughter marriage mentioned in connection with the Brahman. That type of marriage is simply a tightening of the claims in accordance with the emphasis on endogamy and hypergamy in the Brahman caste. A description of the claims between brothers and sisters explains what appears to be a curious phenomenon much more adequately than Dumont's recourse to the "inheritance" of affinity.

To return to general issues: Dumont must be given credit for having detected the uniformity in some fundamental features of South Indian kinship systems, but he has expressed the matter still in lineal terms as an opposition between "kin" and "affines." I suggest that uniformity is better explained in terms of kin categories and the fundamental claims of the brothers and sisters upon each other. This is the reason why we find a centripetal tendency so clearly at work in South India. Smaller and smaller circles of endogamy form purer and purer circles of kin who may be permitted to claim—at least in their own minds—higher ritual status. This also explains the curious aversion, even among the humblest caste, against "mixtures" in their pedigrees.

Our formulation of South Indian kinship draws attention to the shifting character of descent. On the basis of a very similar kin structure, different groups operate various descent preferences: even within the same caste we find some who choose patrilineal descent and some who choose matrilineal descent as distinctive characteristics. It should be clear that the important kin groups are the circles—*curru*—noted by Karve, Banks ("sondakara castes"), and others. Descent is sometimes so secondary that, as Dumont observes, succession and inheritance run counter to descent ideas in numerous castes (1957*b*, p. 20). I would suggest that we have in these low castes a Kandyan preference based on endogamy and bilateral kinship. We shall see, when we turn toward the Malabar coast, that with the development of matrilineal descent, hypergamy again makes its unmistakable appearance.

THE MALABAR COAST

In our consideration of South Indian kinship systems we have been concerned, first, to detect an underlying pattern for the bewilderingly

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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121 611 564 complex, contradictory, and difficult material collected by many authors, and, second, to test the Ceylon model of the association of hypergamy with unilineal descent. It will be recalled that Gough's Kumbapettai village seemed to include the variations in kinship found dispersed over a large area in Ceylon. On the Malabar coast, the situation is, if possible, made even more complicated: in this famous region we find every possible variation of our model, from matrilineal hypergamous systems to endogamous and patrilineal hypergamous systems, all existing pell-mell in the same area. In general, it seems clear that these various features are used as structural indices to distinguish communities from one another. The over-all pattern, by contrast, seems uncluttered: in lower levels of social rank we find, on the whole, endogamous castes which so far as the material goes exhibit the fundamental characteristics of the general structure. In the higher levels of Hindu and Muslim society we find an intense preoccupation with status and social rank, and unilineal descent systems are built out of the general structure. Then, in the limiting cases, each matrilineage behaves as if it were a single unique caste having only hypergamous connections with the outside world.

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In this section, I shall first attempt to establish the existence of the general structure in castes in both North and South Malabar, and I shall then go on to examine the questions of descent and hypergamy. Before we come to specific cases, I should observe that the region exhibits an impressive general cultural uniformity: the language, Malayalam, is very closely related to Tamil; the details of the customs find immediate echoes not only in the material from the rest of South India but among Buddhists in Ceylon as well. Quite apart from structural matters, there is an intuitive appreciation of the fact that we are in a civilization with a distinctive style of its own in which the different customs of discrete groups appear as permutations and combinations of the same set of general ideas.

[197] [171]

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101 564 The term Nayar covers a motley collection of categories of people. Primarily, they are aristocratic Nayar descended from the important royal houses of Cochin and Travancore. There are also people of servant castes who have allegedly taken on the Nayar title in the last century and are only Nayar by courtesy. Some of these categories may be fully endogamous and others, at the higher levels, hypergamous. Though there are again uniformities, it is important to specify which group of Nayar are being considered. The word *taravad*, used by various castes in Malabar, denotes a group of matrilineally related persons with the same name who observe rules of exogamy. The *taravad* may be split into smaller property-holding groups, each with a head *Karanavan*.[7]

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[7] "One who 'acts' ": comp. *Karanava*, "to do" in Sinhalese.

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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terms of address. Related to this Dravidian terminology we find, as might be expected, that all parallel cousins on both sides are forbidden as sexual partners and consequently there is categorical cross-cousin marriage (p. 397). We are not given any details regarding the circle of kin which we have called the micro-caste, for Gough is again more concerned with "lineages." However, it is quite clear that all the kinship customs, especially the obligations between the various categories of kin, appear very similar to the Sinhalese.

The categories of the terminology are widely extended and relations with paternal kin are formally defined. The son, for instance, must make annual offerings to his dead father's spirit. "Paternal kin are known and accorded kinship terms within a range of three to five generations" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 55). The father's sister's son was considered to have special claims on the girl (Schneider and Gough, 1961, p. 398).

It is noteworthy that with the residence pattern in which men live on lineage land with their MB, it is precisely the rights of the paternal kin that are emphasized in customary rituals. Thus paternal kin have an important place in all *rites de passage:* first pregnancy, naming, first rice feeding, *tali*-tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death. At the naming ceremony, for instance, the infant's father's mother chooses the name, the father's father confers it, and the father gives a gold gift (Schneider and Gough, 1961, p. 401).

These rights and obligations are of interest in contrast to the Sinhalese, where residence tends to be patrilocal and where it is, in fact, the claims of the maternal kin that are given the most prominence in the various life-cycle ceremonies.

We should observe that even the joking relationship, which is an interesting feature of the Sinhalese cross-cousin relationship, is duplicated in North Malabar: "Male and female cross cousins had a joking relationship with implicit sexual privileges." And, of course, marriage was initiated with the "gift of the cloth."

So far as the general structure is concerned, there is little doubt as to where we are. However, we are not given much information regarding endogamy and hypergamy. Gough notes only incidentally that "ordinary" Nambiars . . . married exclusively with each other" (1955*a*, p. 56), which suggests kin group endogamy with a likely diminution of unilineal descent ideology in such groups. Gough elsewhere also observes in passing that there were "hypergamous marriages in aristocratic lineages" (1961, p. 400), which conforms to the idea expressed above. Since the pattern can be seen with greater clarity in the evidence regarding the Cochin aristocrats, I refrain from discussing the question of hypergamy here.

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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NORTH TIYYAR

The organization of kinship among the Tiyyar is so similar to the Nayar castes that an extended discussion is unnecessary. Gough observes a difference of degree in the question of the locality of marriage: whereas Nayar men may return to the lands of their MB and marry there, the Tiyyar tend to be grouped together in patrilocal clusters, except that there are some among them who also return to live with their MB (1961, p. 409). These slight differences are unlikely to be of great significance, for the reader should recall that many of these marriages take place in the same village or area, that in this region houses and huts are easy to build and that Nayar men tend to build houses for their wives and children as well.

In Gough's writings the similarity of the kin structure between the Tiyyar and the Sinhalese is particularly evident. The claims of the cross-cousins upon each other, the categorical Dravidian terminology, the nature of the marriage tie, and the various details of custom clearly indicate that we are dealing with the same cultural idiom.

The claims of the MB and FZ are manifested in *rites de passage*. In the *tali* ceremony (which is the well-known prepuberty rite in this area) both these persons appear, and the FZ (or MB wife) ties the *tali* as a "potential mother-in-law" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 58).

The role of the cross-cousins is perhaps more revealing. "The cross-cousin's claim to become a girl's husband . . . must be met at the . . . marriage ceremony if the girl marries some other man. As the couple leave the house, the girl's cross-cousin steps forward in mock attack . . . He is bought off by the bridegroom with a nominal fee and the couple then pass unmolested" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 59).[8] This symbolic statement is identical to the Sinhalese, where the cross-cousin stops the bridal couple at the gate and demands his rights. He is given one hundred betel leaves and the couple moves on.

The Tiyyar of Cochin

It is intriguing to study the kin structure of the Tiyyar caste South Malabar and Cochin—the same term as in North Malabar—which

[8] There is an interesting contradiction in Gough's materal: though she writes of the similarity of the Nayar and the Tiyyar, she notes that with the Tiyyar the MBS (i.e., FZD) is the correct marriage partner (1955*a*, p. 57), whereas with the Nayar the FZS (i.e., MBD) is considered the rightful claimant (1961, p. 398). In view of Dumont's discussion, it would be interesting to know whether significant preferences are involved. Gough does not pursue the matter, but given the contradictions involved in patrilateral cross-cousin marriage (e.g., it cannot be combined with hypergamy rules) it is likely that Gough is merely using a shorthand formula for symmetrical cross-cousin marriage.

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general structures as elsewhere.

We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad* like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with various groups in Ceylon.

Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary relations between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pollution and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-cousin. Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ?) parts her hair in certain pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB, and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is in the North (1955*a*, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categorical cross-cousin marriage.

I have no information about the terminology of reference or address, though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to those of the North Tiyyar.

I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong

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claim of the brothers and sisters upon one another, a point which is indeed specifically made by Gough (1955*a*, p. 61).

In view of all this evidence, it is somewhat disconcerting to discover that Gough finds it necessary to identify "residual matrilineages" to explain the role of maternal kin as well as the taboos on maternal parallel cousins in this caste. We are faced once more with the inexplicable bias in the direction of "lineage" explanations to the exclusion of others even in so sophisticated an observer as Dr. Gough.

She notes (1957*a*, p. 61) that "the former existence of exogamous matrilineal clans underlines this persistence of the bond between women and their natal kinfolk, especially their brothers." But the evidence she gives (p. 60) to show even the former existence of such clans is hardly convincing: "My informants knew nothing about these clans except that they were once exogamous. They are not so today, since some people do not remember their clan names. Though the clans have died out, marriage is prohibited between known matrilineal kin."

Although the general structure is verified in this group as well, we have no information regarding hypergamy. We can only say with certainty that the comparison of the Tiyyar in North and South Malabar shows quite directly that slight variations permit the general structure to be linked to a patrilineal as well as a matrilineal descent ideology. The underlying theme is general, and the variations in descent, in residence, in inheritance are local and highly specific.

THE MATRILINEAL CASTES OF COCHIN AND HYPERGAMY

Before we turn to an examination of the aristocratic matrilineages of Cochin which have fascinated many anthropologists by their perfectly logical but highly exotic solutions to sex and marriage, I wish to underline some of the principles of endogamy and hypergamy.

First, the purpose of endogamy is to cut off the unit from kinship connections with other units. A complete severance of all intercourse (food and sex are usually chosen as symbols) renders the unit unique, but it will not in itself establish hierarchical superiority. To express hierarchy (as well as separation) some asymmetrical relations are logically necessary. In endogamous castes this takes the form of asymmetrical forms of address, dress symbolism, and, significantly, a rule such as "They will take food from us (*A*), but we will not take food from them (*B*)—*A*, in other words, is superior to *B*.

Second, when the groups are placed on an interlocking hierarchy, more subtle expressions can be used. "*A* will not accept food from *B*,

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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121 564 582 613 but *B* will from *A*; furthermore, *A* will not 'give' women to *B*, but will 'take' women from *B*." The second method (hypergamy), though only a logical development of the first, and a very precise way of manifesting superior status, has complex implications. In effect, a progressive distinction of status is made between the children of the sister (superior) and the children of the brother (inferior). Hence not merely the caste but the entire network of kinship is placed on a gradient of ritual status. Furthermore, if hypergamy is to be combined with lineages, it should be clear that, although the matter can be harmoniously combined with matrilineages (i.e., the brother partaking of the superior ritual connections of his sister), the patrilineal principles raise difficult problems, since the sister is given "away" to a superior group and the brothers can partake in the increase in ritual status only by reason of their claims on her children or in some other indirect fashion. Also, since the position of the woman affects the status of her children in both matrilineal and patrilineal contexts, it appears difficult to combine intracaste hypergamy with patrilineal descent at least in South India. Thus we get ZD marriage (i.e., symmetrical exchange) coupled with Brahman caste endogamy in Tanjore, but an entire scale of hypergamous matrilineages all the way from Kshatriya to Sudra status in Malabar. A similar feature was observed in eastern Ceylon.

The first method (endogamy) permits the ethnographer to make simple statements about discrete categories of people; the second (hypergamy) is more complex, since the status-bearing unit can be a single lineage with hypergamous connections and it may be difficult in the continuous descending steps of status to say exactly where one "caste" category ends and the next begins (see fig. 37).

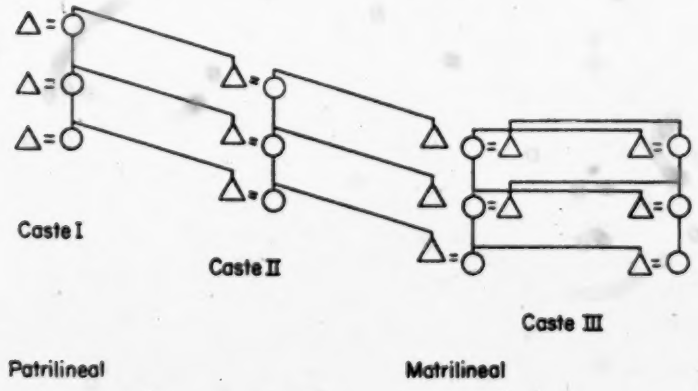

Figure 37. Patrilineal and matrilineal hypergamy.

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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Let us now return to the facts:

The Nayar family in Cochin and South Malabar (also referred to as Central Kerala) is also organized on the principles of the matrilineal *taravad*. Among ordinary people, matrilineal groups beyond the household are barely recognized for most intents and purposes, but among the wealthy and aristocratic classes, the *taravad* finds an impressive elaboration. Gough presents the ideal model as a matrilineal clan with localized matri-lines all of which are exogamous. The women have equal or hypergamous connections with men of other *taravad* or castes, whereas the men visit women of lower *taravad*. The residential pattern is that brothers and sisters live in the same household and men visit their "wives" in their own households. This contrasts with the North Nayar picture in which women join their husbands in their houses, and with the Mapilla picture (their Muslim neighbors) in which the men join their wives in the houses as in Ceylon. Of course, in a climate and region where houses are easily built and where the kin of both the husband and the wife are quite likely to be in the near vicinity of the married couple, if not in the same community, these residential arrangements may be looked upon primarily as symbolic statements of "difference" rather than fundamental differences in kinship systems and sentiments.

We may now raise further questions:

First: to what extent does our previous discussion of the general structure help us to understand the Nayar situation? A careful examination of the data makes it clear that the Nayar family in Cochin and South Malabar presents a further elaboration upon the Dravidian theme. It should be emphasized that this is hardly the impression one would have received from the earlier work of Gough. It is curious to observe, as Dumont (1961*a*) does, to what extent Gough's picture of the Nayar situation has progressively altered from one in which there were matrilineages with hardly any recognition of the role of the *pater*, to one in which the father and his kin are recognized and "preferential" cross-cousin marriage is at least observed. The change in point of view is a sobering thought as far as "objective" anthropology is concerned: for a perusal of the writings of this highly observant and careful author shows that she is using an African model (including concepts of clanship and ties of ritual collaboration) in her earlier work. It is only very gradually that she comes around to consider her material in its context in South India.

As far as we can observe, the kin terminology of the high-caste Nayar of Cochin and South Malabar is structurally identical to that of North Malabar and hence to the Dravidian terminology of cross-cousin marriage, with one significant difference: there appears to be no term for actual cross-cousins. It is true that Gough does not provide

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a consistent terminology of reference—which is important in South India and Ceylon—but since the language and indeed all the rest of the terms themselves are identical to those of North Malabar, the lack of terms precisely for cross-cousins may be significant. The matter is all the more curious since such terms as, for example, *maru mahan* (son "by marriage"!)[9] which Ego uses for ZS in the same *taravad* and which reciprocates with MB (*mama*) also carry the implication "son-in-law" and "father-in-law."

However we may wish to interpret this intriguing lacuna (could it be an aspect of Nambudiri–Nayar hypergamy?), it appears that there is, first, a prohibition on sexual and marital connections with parallel cousins and also a "preference" for cross-cousin marriage. Both rules are clearly present, though they do not carry the categorical implication which is attached to them elsewhere.

Gough's account of this matter is not very clear. She notes first (1961, p. 365): "Bilateral cross-cousin marriage was freely permitted, with some preference for marriage to the mother's brother's daughter or step-daughter." A little further on she notes the "preference" in passing: "It may seem strange that preferred cross-cousin marriage should have existed side by side with group marriage, for cross-cousin marriage . . . suggests an interest in prolonging the ties brought about both by paternity and by matrilineal kinship."

It seems to me that even in her most recent publication Gough is trying to minimize the role of paternity among the Nayar when the facts are palpably otherwise. She notes, "Many men, presumably, entered marriage relations with cross-cousins only incidentally—often, presumably, without being fully aware of the blood relationship" (1961, p. 365)—a presumption which seems extremely unlikely even in the Malabar conditions she describes.

We should perhaps stress that Gough's data suggest much closer similarities to a South Indian pattern than her theoretical framework permits. Consider the customary relations between cross-cousins: "Cross-cousins of the same sex and caste had a familiar, mildly joking relationship if they maintained contact . . . cross-cousins of the opposite sex might talk to each other with rather more freedom than to unrelated persons. In his role of enangan a boy sometimes tied the tali for his maternal uncle's daughter . . ." (1961, pp. 364–365).

We should note this last sentence particularly: the role of *enangan* as a cross-cousin and hence a perpetual affine on the Dravidian pattern is a new development in the work of Gough. It confirms our impression that even in Cochin where the *taravad* reaches its greatest development, a version of the general structure is still visible. The question of "perpetual affinity" has been discussed extensively by Dumont

[9] See the discussions of *maru* by Karve (1953, p. 213) and by Dumont (1957a).

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(1961*b*, pp. 20 ff.), and it is important in tying the Nayar material into the South Indian picture.

With all these similarities, in what sense, then, is this system a logical elaboration of the general structure? What makes the structure of kinship among the aristocratic Nayar a special case is that in it we find again the combination of hypergamy and unilineal descent.

As we noted above, extensive hypergamy in the context of matrilineage results in a consistent differentiation of status between lineages, and it allows special ritual status to be claimed by each autonomous matrilineage. It will be observed that matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is the only consistent pattern that can be associated with the hypergamous and matrilineal kin structure described above.

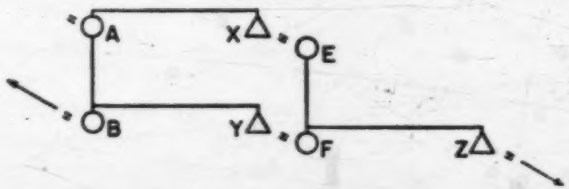

Figure 38. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

In figure 38, sister A establishes a *sambandam* connection with a person of superior status. Her children, B and Y (members of the matrilineage), are themselves superior in status to the children of their MB (X), who has a *sambandam* with a woman of equal or lower status to himself (E). Hence if cross-cousin marriage is to take place, the MBD (F) may be hypergamously connected with Y (i.e., matrilateral cross-cousin marriage), but B, like her mother A, will be given further up the hierarchy and cannot be permitted to have *sambandam* with Z (i.e., patrilateral cross-cousin marriage).

We should note in passing that this association of MBD marriage and hypergamy in these castes is a remarkable corroboration of Leach's hypothesis regarding the structural implications of matrilateral cross-cousin marriage systems. Leach (1951) writes of patrilineal systems associated with hypogamy (women go down) among the Kachin. It is certainly salutary to find that this mirror-image of Leach's model, that is, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage in a matrilineal context, is associated with hypergamy, asymmetry, and distinctions of status.

To return to Malabar, the combination of matrilineal descent together with the rules of hypergamy is consistent with great differentiation of status between the descent groups—so much so that in the proliferation of descent groups it appears to be difficult, indeed impossible, to say where one caste ends and the other begins. Some de-

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scent groups may be generally placed in the highest categories and still be connected by a chain of descending unions with such categories as the Sudra. To recall the situation in Ceylon, such groups as the Karava (Fishers), who are usually seen as a "separate" caste in other parts of the island, are associated with the hierarchy of Vellalar matrilineal descent groups on the eastern littoral. Thus, in the Malabar context, too, a category such as Nayar covers a wide spectrum of ranked descent groups. Gough suggests that apart from the royal matrilineages of the various kingdoms, it is possible to detect five subcategories of Nayar groups (1961, pp. 308–309): (*a*) Kiriattil and Vellayma Nayar, (*b*) Puratta Charna (Outdoor Retainers) Nayar (but these have subdivisions such as Paricha Menon (Leaders of the Shield), (*c*) Agatta Charna (Indoor Retainers) Nayar, (*d*) Pallichan Nayar, and (*e*) Sudra Nayar. This is not a hard and fast hierarchy and we are told (p. 309) that "In some districts they ranked in the order given and men of the higher [category] might marry women of the lower [category]; the reverse was in theory forbidden. In other districts the [categories] seem to have disputed for precedence and *not to have regularly intermarried*" (my italics).

It is clear that in this system it is possible, for instance, to have at the top a single matrilineage whose men may be connected to a small group of matrilineages who are equals and who marry among themselves. They in turn may be connected with a larger group of matrilineages of a still lower caste, and so on. Furthermore, actual *sambandam* connections may or may not be systematically established between the levels. As long as the principles are clear, it hardly matters what the status-bearing groups are called: in widening circles we have the matrilineage, which may be part of a hypergamous cluster (category), which in turn may be part of a more inclusive "subcaste" or indeed an endogamous caste.

Also in the Cochin region, according to Gough (1961, p. 319), hypergamy is a custom of the aristocratic matrilineages and is associated with the prestige of unilineal descent, whereas in the levels "below the Nayar temple menials" the categories were endogamous "as is usual in the caste system throughout India."

Why hypergamy at the aristocratic levels? Gough in answer to this question has taken a curious combination of materialist-psychoanalytic arguments: it is her theory that hypergamy accords with the power structure of the political system and with the special reasons why virgins must be deflowered by powerful men before they are safe for ordinary mortals (see Gough 1955*a* and 1961, *passim*).

Dumont has proposed an important, but very different, answer. He notes rightly that the most powerful and superior Nayar lineage still had hypergamous connections with Brahman who were ritually su-

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perior but politically inferior to the royal lineages. This would indicate that the arguments emanating from the power structure are of limited value. Nor does the psychoanalytic argument carry conviction (see Yalman, 1963).

Dumont further suggests that the Nayar position has significant cultural affinities to certain practices of the Basavi. Among the Basavi, a girl is given in marriage to a god. She may then be approached by all kinds of men, and the children she may bear belong to her own family. Thus by virtue of her marriage to a god, her children are freed from the constraints of the rule of patrilineal descent and follow matrilineal descent. In the same fashion, Dumont thinks the girls of aristocratic matrilineages are married to Nambudiri Brahman, who are referred to as "Gods of the Earth."

Dumont's point is worth making, for it shows the element of piety involved in these customs which have been severely misunderstood in India and elsewhere. The man of the matrilineage sacrifices his own children (who belong to others) in order to give his sister to a god and keep her children.

This may indeed be one of the cultural dimensions of hypergamy in this region, but the system is so clearly and effectively associated with the fundamental structural principles of matrilineal descent groups in a caste context that the specific cultural features (piety, etc.) do not need to be treated as a necessary part of the picture. A similar set of structural circumstances gives rise to an essentially similar picture in Ceylon.

The general principles of status differentiation in Cochin have been subsumed under the following ideal formula by Karve (1953, p. 269):

Nambudiri	m.	marries	Nambudiri	f.	Children	become	Nambudiri
Nambudiri	m.	=	Ksatriya	f.	Children	=	Kshatriya
Ksatriya	m.	=	Ksatriya	f.	Children	=	non-Kshatriya [*sic.*]
Nambudiri	m.	=	Nayar	f.	Children	=	Nayar, status 1
Ksatriya	m.	=	Nayar	f.	Children	=	Nayar, status 2
Nayar	m.	=	Nayar	f.	Children	=	Nayar, status 3

It is quite clear that we find the matrilineal *taravad* in its most impressive development as a corporation precisely at the highest levels of society. At the other end of the scale we have only the desire for prestige:

The Tharvad is always named after an ancestress and referred to as the Tharvad of so and so (woman). If a man does not belong to a Tharvad he is not respected and I was told by an officer in a mill that though he was well educated and a salaried man he had not the requisite social position as

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121 564 613 they were landless orphans. If he bought land, built a house and settled there with his sister, bringing up her children, he would gain social status. He said he knew of many a poor labourer serving in the mill, saving money to establish a Tharvad in his sister's name and become "somebody" in his caste. (Karve, 1953, p. 267)

The problem of finding suitable husbands for the women of aristocratic matrilineal Tharvads has been solved by the Nambudiri Brahman connection in Cochin. The situation is not very different with North Malabar aristocrats. We are told that the Kolattiri lineage had difficulty in getting accepted as of high status among the ancient "Kshatriya" lineages of Kottayam and Kurumbranad, so the Kolattiri Rajas brought a caste called Koil Tamburan from Travancore. "Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambudiri men and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 56).

Karve with her usual insight and evocative examples puts the issue simply (1953, pp. 258–259): "The Kshatriyas claim descent from the sun-family of the ancient Hindu Kshatriyas of the north—the house of Rama. All the sons born in Kshatriya families, i.e., ruling houses of Travancore and Cochin have Sanskrit names of the Sun-god with the suffix varmā . . . We have already seen that in olden times as a rule and even now generally the Kshatriya women have Nambudiri Brahmins as husbands. . . . There is a village near Cochin belonging to a rich Nayar Thārvad . . . which is called the 'village of evening visits of the Nambudris.'" And this accurate and colorful picture is rounded up with the direct statement, "Among poorer Nayars cross-cousin marriage is favoured."

Other Evidence from Malabar

121 611 We have considered the evidence from Malabar from the point of view of other South Indian systems and have, I believe, been able to establish both the principles of the general structure and the association of systems of hypergamy with unilineal descent. A further point to note is that systems of descent, at least in this region, could be considered as a secondary feature to a large extent independent of the specific forms of kinship and marriage. Very similar groups appear to follow different forms of descent in various regions. We should [171] recall that even the Sinhalese, who are regarded as being "patrilineal" by many authors today, followed "matrilineal" descent at least among the royal family in the seventeenth century. And conversely one author has noted that in some parts of Kerala "the Nairs also follow the father right social system" (D'Souza, 1959, p. 493).

[564] There is a vast body of literature, especially in connection with

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Malabar, in which patrilineal and matrilineal castes who are similar in their kinship customs are described, and again we find that other sections of the same casts are patrilineal or matrilineal in different localities. In parts of Ceylon I would hear villagers suggest that sons took their "names" from their father and daughters from their mother, a reflection not so much of descent (for these ideas were not applied in practice) but of the difference between the sexes.

Even the Muslims are not very different. On the Malabar coast the diversity of origins in the Muslim community can be easily traced in the complex body of customs, appellations, different signs, and practice whereby subgroups appear to distinguish one another. Gough (1961) has discussed some features of the matrilineal Muslims (Mapilla); D'Souza (1959) in a carefully documented article observes that, leaving aside a special group who call themselves *Arabi* and attempt to follow traditional Islam, Muslims in general conform to the patterns of kinship usual in Malabar and are divided into patrilineal and matrilineal *taravads* (p. 492). Moreover, in the case of patrilineal *taravads*, several of them again come together to form an *endogamous* group; hence in any locality there are several endogamous Moplah groups (p. 493). He goes on to make the following observation (p. 498):

> In the coastal North Malabar, as one proceeds southwards to places like Quilandy and Badagara, the mother right social organization undergoes a change. The change becomes quite distinct in the coastal region of South Malabar. The change in mother right traits . . . may be primarily attributed to the fact that whereas in North Malabar the ancestral property is inherited exclusively in the female line, in the south it is inherited . . . in the male line. But the social organization is essentially mother right and the modifications are such as suit the change in the principle of inheritance.

It is not merely this shifting picture of descent and inheritance which strikes one as being entirely in line with the material collected by Iyer (1909, 1912, 1937) in all kinds of small caste groups, for D'Souza (1959, p. 502) firmly establishes that the Muslim Mapilla also follow the Nambudiri–Nayar model of hypergamy with considerable dedication: "For instance, the Thangal males can marry women from any other groups of Moplahs [Mapilla] but Thangal women cannot marry any man other than a Thangal. An Arabi male can marry any [Mapilla] woman other than a Thangal, but the Arabi woman can marry, besides an Arabi male, only a Thangal male, and so on."

There is little doubt that the marriage customs recorded by D'Souza bear a close similarity to those recorded for the Moors of Ceylon earlier in this volume. D'Souza's evidence on names is not directed to the question of hypergamy and prestige, but it does appear that names

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are perpetuated as indices of status—to the extent, indeed, that with the matrilineal Thangal group, who also claim patrilineal descent from the Prophet, an elaborate combination of patronymics and matronymics has been developed (1959, p. 501).

CONCLUSION

In view of the great number of communities that have remained untouched, the evidence considered in detail may seem to offer only a very narrow theoretical base. This is not so. We have attempted to show that the general structural model may be connected to a great variety of descent patterns. Only a few cases would be sufficient to demonstrate the point. We have found many more. We have also noted the interesting balance in the customary recognition given to the formal claims of the paternal and maternal relatives upon the children of the marriage. In structures such as the Tanjore Brahman, where the father-son relationship is assured by common residence and inheritance, it is precisely the rights of the MB which are elaborated at all *rites de passage*, and the ZS has formal obligations at this man's funeral.

In the matrilineal structure of Malabar and Ceylon we find in contrast that the great proliferation of ceremonial is concerned with the rights and obligations of the father. Quite apart from the entire complex of *Tali kettu kalyanam* in Malabar, we may note that the obligations of the son at this father's funeral receive special emphasis, particularly among the Nayar. As Fawcett notes in connection with Nayar funerals: "The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son) sets fire to the pyre at the head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the same time to the pyre at the foot of the corpse" (Thurston, 1906, p. 209). At this most solemn occasion the Nayar and the Kandyan Sinhalese agree on balancing the obligations of the offspring of brother and sister, for with the Sinhalese, too, the ZS as well as the son must partake in the final rites of a man.

There is always the emphasis on the connections between the children of the brother and the sister. Brother and sister must be separated, but their offspring must also be united. Dumont writes of the double principles of consanguinity and affinity, but it seems that the two must be intermeshed to protect and perpetuate the purity of the family. Perhaps this is an aspect of the union of those divine creative principles which one hears so much about in Indian philosophy: male and female, man and wife, the Brahman Lord and his consort, Shiva and Shakti. These are two, but they are also one.

Even the terminology of kinship exemplifies the idea of the union

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of the two principles in one. Thus, such terms as *massina* (Sinh. and Tamil) and its variants *maittunan* or *maccinan* (Tamil) and *maiduna* (Kannada), all of which carry the implication of cross-cousins who are expected to unite, appear to be derived from the Sanskrit *maiduna* or *mithuna* which also refers to the sexual intercourse between the god Shiva and the goddess Shakti, who are both one and two.[10] The depiction of them in the very act of union (*mithuna*) is one of the intriguing motifs in Indian religious sculpture, a form of art which in its formal beauty and religious expressiveness is almost unmatched.

These ideas are not intended to be mysterious. They are simply the logical implications of caste principles carried to their very limit in the highest caste. There should be no doubt at all that Indian thinkers, great logicians and great mystics, should have been concerned with the ultimate origin of purity.[11]

A conception such as this, the union of man and wife, who are also the children of a brother and sister, allows us to observe the principle of *jati* ("caste," but also birth, category) from the inside. The narrowest circle is the individual. Then the couple, ideally cross-cousins. Then the small circle of kin who intermarry with one another. And going on from this, wider and wider concentric circles and the more inclusive categories of caste. The patterns of North India are likely to be different, but the principles of caste endogamy are intimately related to the family in South India and Ceylon.

Our itinerary has now been completed. We started from a mountain village in Ceylon and widening our investigations have ended up in South India. Behind the great differences in thought and behavior, we have found that the general principles of kinship appear to have considerable uniformity in this region. Ostensibly, kinship systems can be classified as matrilineal, patrilineal, hypergamous, and bilateral in Ceylon: a rapid journey through the Tamil-speaking parts, the Nilgiri Hills, and the Malabar coast has made us aware that a similar classification is possible in South India. But all these variations appear to exist within the framework of principles common to all the groups we have considered.

It is to be hoped that it will be possible in the future to carry the work farther north in order to learn whether South Indian structures are transformed into North Indian structures. In the realm of kin structure in South India and Ceylon, we appear to be dealing with

[10] On the etymology of the terms see Karve (1953), p. 209.

[11] It seems possible that one of the simplest and most frequent ritual acts in Ceylon and South India—the splitting of a coconut into two and allowing the liquid inside to run out—may be a part of *mithuna* symbolism. For the coconut has a *male* and a *female* end: in the act the male and the female are split. This is an idea of wide prevalence in Ceylonese ritual; see Yalman (1966).

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171 the dialects of a common language. It is curious that principles of social organization should take us back to systems of communication.

I do not wish to reify the principles of South Indian kinship into something distinct from certain categories of thought and certain patterns of behavior. In all our work there is always this curious dialectic between the fact and the idea, between action and thought, between constructs of the mind and the activities of men. But both sides of the dialectic can be regarded as emanating from the same traditional "structure" behind both the thought and the act. It is noteworthy to observe how the form of the "structure" varies in a given region like the dialects of a language. Yet the variations appear as logical permutations of a limited set of principles. Again like language, the principles are clearly not embedded in the utilitarian particularities of specific social systems. They appear to be certain fundamental principles of organization which are behind the various manifestations of specific social patterns. In this sense what we call "social structure" corresponds to a grammar which relates the activities of individuals to one another and makes communication and order possible in social life.